

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services

Child Abuse and Neglect

Issue 41

WINTER 1996

HOW DOES THE LAW DEFINE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

*Edna Samuels, Licensing Consultant
Wayne County*

The Child Protection Act:

The Michigan Public Act 238 of 1975 is commonly referred to as the Child Protection Law. This act mandates the Michigan Department of Social Services to be the single agency responsible for child protective services. It **requires** the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons and it **permits** the reporting of child abuse and neglect by all persons. The law covers all persons under the age of 18 years.

"Child abuse" as defined by the child protection law means "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or maltreatment." Child abuse may fall into the following categories:

1. Physical injuries: bruises, scrapes or scratches in the skin, lacerations or cuts, burns and scalds, fractures, head and brain injuries, and internal injuries;
2. Sexual abuse: sexual contact or sexual penetration;
3. Neonatal addiction: drug addiction in newborn infants;
4. Maternal deprivation: a condition resulting in the failure of an infant to grow and develop as expected (failure to thrive);
5. Injury-resulting incidents of a questionable nature: such as, poisoning, gunshot wounds, stab wounds or falls;
6. Emotional abuse: parental behavior which leads to psychological as opposed to physical harm.

"Child neglect" as defined by the child protection law means "harm to a child's health or welfare which occurs through negligent treatment including failure to provide shelter, clothing, medical care, or adequate food." Child neglect may fall in the following categories:

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

A fine line exists between some forms of discipline and child abuse. This *Better Homes and Centers* issue deals primarily with concerns of physical and sexual abuse. I want to emphasize the importance of positive discipline since excessive discipline can evolve into child abuse. With this in mind, Michigan's child care rules prohibit corporal punishment, including spanking.

Punishment is defined as, "a penalty imposed on an offender for a crime or wrong doing." While we often make references to punishment for a child's misbehavior, it is better to think in terms of discipline which is defined as "to train or develop by instruction and exercise in self-control." Child abuse referrals received by the Licensing Division usually result from a child being "punished" and seldom from a child being disciplined. Discipline is not just getting a child to "mind." It involves helping a child to gain control over his or her own behavior.

Caring for children requires patience and self-control. When these are not practiced, the child can become an unfortunate victim. The Division has developed two videos as part of its video series on discipline, including positive forms of discipline. They represent, in part, our efforts to train providers and caregivers to find ways to put positive discipline techniques in place.

Positive discipline methods will help a child move forward toward self-discipline and independence. It also minimizes the risk of being accused of child abuse.

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A PROVIDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT

Edna Samuels, Licensing Consultant
Wayne County

Most serious abuse injuries occur among younger children, infants and preschoolers. These children are small in size, thus making them more vulnerable. Since many young children come into contact with persons outside of the home, these injuries are likely to go unreported. Therefore, an infant or toddler may receive an injury, such as a fracture, and not receive treatment.

Any person can report child abuse or neglect, but, persons **required** by law to report must do so immediately when abuse or neglect is **suspected**. Those persons required to report include physicians, coroners, social workers, dentists, medical examiners, nurses, audiologists, certified social workers, social work technicians, school administrators, school counselors, teachers, law enforcement officers and **regulated child care providers**. If any of the above persons have **reasonable cause** to suspect child abuse or neglect, he must immediately make an oral report, or see to it that an oral report is made to protective services. Within 72 hours after making an oral report, the reporting person must also follow up with a **written** report. The report can be done on a department form, DSS 3200, which is available at the local county Department of Social Services office.

Reporting by telephone can be made to protective services 24 hours a day. The intake and referral unit generally handles calls and arrangements during regular business hours. The 24 hour protective services staff receive calls around the clock, on weekends and on holidays.

Information needed when making a referral:

1. Explain the situation.
2. Give factual information: what do you know, how do you know it.
3. State what was observed or heard.
4. Include in your written report the name and birthdate of the child, description of the abuse or neglect, the name of the parent(s), and addresses of the child's parent, guardian, or other persons with whom the child may be living.

A delay in reporting may result in further harm to the child. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect by a person who is required to do so, constitutes civil and criminal liability.

What to include in your agency handbook:

A child care facility should include in its policy handbook a statement that briefly defines what the

Child Protection Act is. It should let parents know where they can obtain a copy should they wish more information. Parents should be made aware that as a regulated child care provider, you are **required** to report **suspected** child abuse or neglect to protective services and that you will do so. Parents should be made aware that you are only making the report out of concern for the family and that you are only reporting factual information.

Staff responsibility and training

All caregivers should be made aware of what the Child Protection Act is and their responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Staff should be knowledgeable about child development and what is typical of childhood behavior. Staff should be perceptive and observant of any changes in a child's disposition or unexplainable marks or bruises. This can only be established with ongoing and consistent interaction by the caregiver with the children. Child care facilities are regulated for the protection of children. Protective services mandates that certain persons in the community provide protection to those children who are vulnerable by the **required** reporting and the **permitted** reporting of suspected abuse and neglect. The protection of children is everybody's priority.



WHY DON'T THEY DO SOMETHING?

*Jim Henry, Protective Services Supervisor
Kalamazoo County*

Over the years, I have talked to many people in group, school and agency meetings and with individuals about the need to report child abuse and neglect. Oftentimes during my presentations, I have encountered frustration from those who have previously reported child abuse/neglect and the outcome has been far from what they expected. These reporters have most often ventured forth into uncharted territory by making a referral out of concern for the welfare of children only to be disappointed Child Protective Services (CPS) either did not investigate, or an investigation failed to result in services to the family.

As a supervisor, I personally want to recognize and validate the frustration. Unfortunately, CPS is restricted by law and DSS policies. The criteria for deciding whether an investigation should occur are outlined to Protective Services by these policies. Taking these criteria and imposing them on complaint allegations is certainly problematic. Each referral has a variety of particular circumstances that indicate concern. The first question is always, "Is there a connection between parental behavior and the specific risk to the child?" The next question is "Does the risk warrant Protective Services investigation due to the significance of the allegations?"

When a case is assigned, workers interview children and parents. In order for a case to be substantiated and services provided, there must be credible evidence that abuse/neglect has occurred. Consequently, there can be great suspicion and much concern regarding the welfare of children, yet, without credible evidence, CPS is unable to intervene. Cases where suspicions are high but credible evidence is lacking are particularly difficult. There may very well be safety issues for the children, but there is no way to proceed further.

Sometimes concerned reporters generalize their previous frustrations with CPS and fail to call the next time a possible abuse/neglect situation arises. When the reporter forms an attitude that it is useless to call because CPS won't act, this immediately sets up a situation for a child to be harmed. Each situation involving a child has differing circumstances and is evaluated by a CPS supervisor in light of the face value of the complaint, previous history with CPS, and evaluation criteria as provided by policy. What may have happened to a previous complaint has no bearing on a new referral.

To be an advocate for children demands continued commitment. Reporting suspicions of abuse/neglect is the only protection children in danger have. Generalizing previous contact or past frustrations and failing to report to CPS only jeopardizes the next child who may be harmed.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

*Sandra Settergren, Licensing Consultant
Washtenaw County*

In my 16 years experience in licensing day care homes, the most common offenders in sexual abuse allegations have been teen and preteen boys who live in the home and have been inappropriately left in charge of the day care children. I am talking about young boys, ages 10 to 15. They are extremely curious and terrified of girls their own age.

Most child care providers think they have some understanding of the effects of sexual abuse on the victims, but few have stopped to contemplate the devastating effects that an allegation of sexual abuse against their own son have on the day care family. If the allegation is true, it can destroy your livelihood, cause serious damage to your family and have long-lasting repercussions for your son.

Why did he do this? Will he be arrested? Will everyone in the neighborhood hear about this? Will he have problems at school? Will this affect his future relationships with women? Where can he find treat-

ment which will cause him to accept responsibility for the harm he has done without destroying his self-esteem? These are very difficult and frightening questions.

The better question is, "How can I avoid all this?" It can be very difficult for mothers to recognize their young son's awakening sexual curiosity. He's still your little boy. Recognize this curiosity as a normal stage of life and don't put him in a situation where he can be tempted or falsely accused. The mere accusation of sexual abuse can shake your family in ways you have never even contemplated.

Don't leave your son in charge of the day care children! Ever! He's not an adult and he's not the person these parents hired to watch their children. They hired you. You are always required to provide appropriate adult supervision. Never leave your minor children in charge of day care children in your home at any time, including evenings and weekends.

Protect your child! Never put him in a position to be accused of sexual abuse! Both your day care children and your own children are too valuable for you to run such a risk.

STAFF ALSO . . .

Carole M. Grates, Area Manager
Genesee County

. . . deserve to be protected from situations that may set them up for misunderstandings or false allegations. Allegations of child abuse affect everyone involved. It is important that those who provide child care take precautions to protect both children and staff. Children need to be assured of a safe place when parents are not available. Below are some suggestions that will help to keep children safe while assuring that staff are also protected.

Staff Policies

- Interview carefully and check references for anyone, volunteer or paid, who will have contact with the children.
- Implement a staff screening program that asks staff about criminal convictions and involvement in abuse or neglect of children or adults.
- Provide clearly written program policies to staff.
- Provide peer supervision to one another. Assure that one staff person *is not* left alone with any one child or group of children.
- Provide supervision at all times in all places (bathroom, nap room, outside.)
- Provide staff training on the signs of child physical and sexual abuse and child neglect.
- Keep a daily written log of unusual incidents, accidents, injuries, or even of bruises that are seen on a child when he arrives.
- Develop and implement a written policy regarding staff responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Include their legal and moral responsibility to report such abuse; the methods for reporting; and the possibility they may have to testify for the child.

Parent Policies and Practices:

- Have an open door policy that never excludes parents from visiting at any time.
- Inform parents about the policy regarding staff responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Provide a daily opportunity for parents to talk with the child's primary caregiver and/or the director.
- Involve parents in the planning and operation of the program through advisory and work committees.
- Provide clearly written program policies to parents.
- Provide admission interviews and orientation sessions to encourage questions and answer concerns.

- Provide written accident reports to parents as well as verbal reports of an accident.

While these will not assure that abusive situations will never happen, they are practices that will provide better protection for children. They will also give staff a feeling of confidence that it is all right to hug children without worrying that they are compromising their position of authority.



"How Does the Law Define . . ."

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1. Physical neglect which is the failure to provide adequate shelter, clothing, improper or adequate food.
2. Abandonment and failure to provide adequate supervision, such as in cases of young children being left alone and inadequate child care planning.
3. Educational neglect is the failure on the part of the parents or caretaker to see that a child attends school, for example, or consistently fails to get a child up and dressed on time.
4. Dependency is the lack of any legally responsible adult to plan for the child's needs — even if the child's needs are met.

The law also specifies who is required to report suspected abuse or neglect.

HELPING THE ABUSED CHILD

Better Homes and Centers Editorial Staff

No one is prepared for the time a child discloses an incident of abuse. But child care providers who have learned a little about how abused children learn to cope and how they see their world are in a better position to help.

Abused children generally exhibit behaviors that indicate they are afraid of and distrust adults. They often will seek spaces or activities where they can be isolated and avoid conflicts. Some children may exhibit extremely aggressive behavior as a defense. Yet in spite of these fears, they do not hate their parents. In fact, although they may resent the abuse, they still love their parents.

A major concern of abused children is losing their family. They have been told not to talk to others about the abuse. This often includes the threat that they will be responsible for breaking up the family if they tell. To any child, having no family is worse

than having an abusive family. In addition, many children do not see themselves as victims. They have been programmed to believe that they actually cause the parent to abuse them. Since this is their only family experience, most believe their home life is normal.

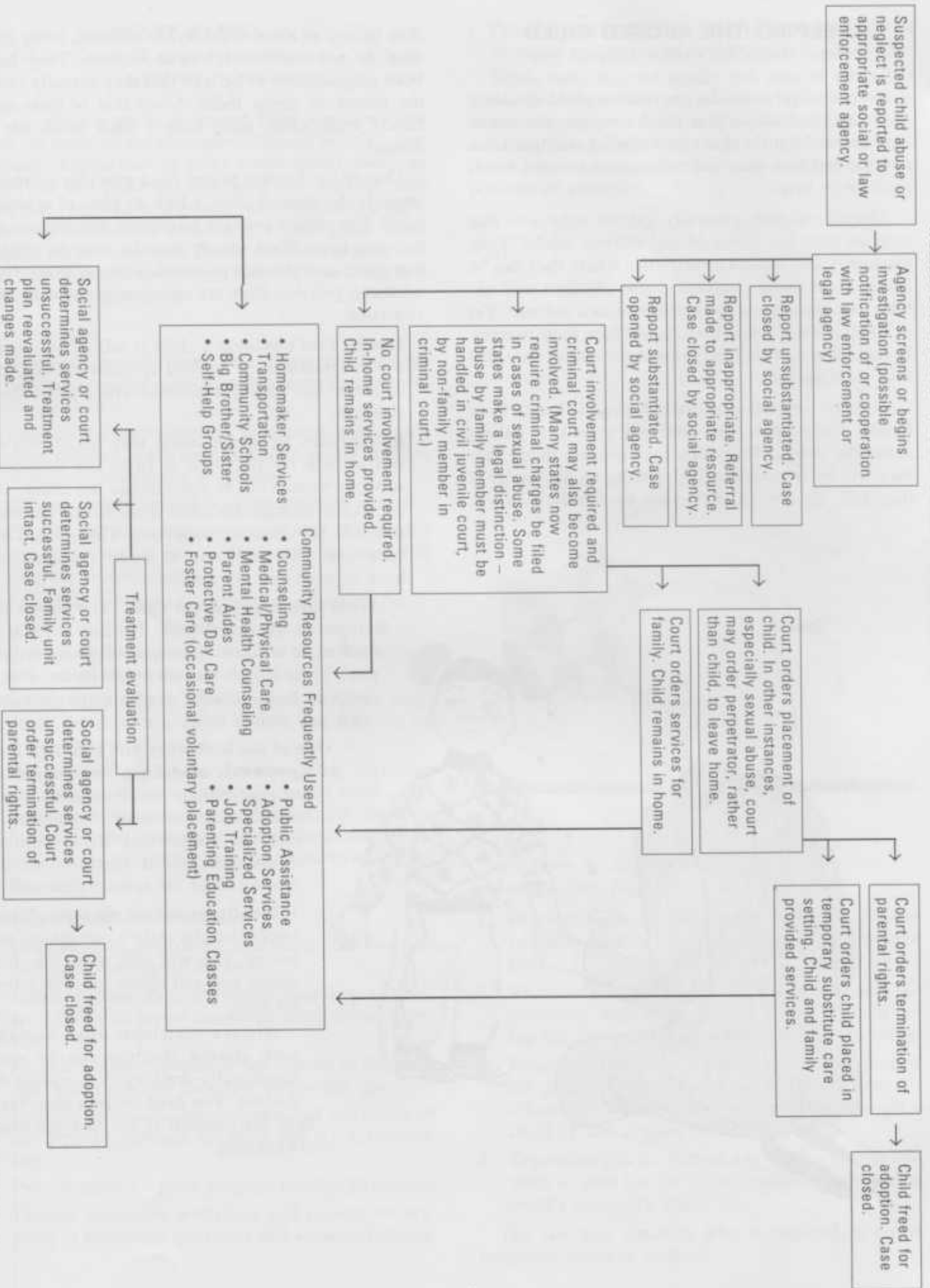
One of the hardest things for a provider to understand is the abused child's lack of trust of a loving adult. The child's primary protectors, the parents, are harming him. What reason does he have to believe that other caregivers will not also betray him? Then what can you do? Here are some suggestions to help you cope:

- **Listen.** Don't assume a child is telling you about trivial situations. If a child is ready to talk, the situation has probably reached crisis proportions at home.
- **Be realistic.** Reporting abuse may not always result in help for the child at first. The protective services worker has to substantiate the abuse. Often a child changes his mind about telling the story and will say it never happened. This should not keep you from reporting as many times as you have to until you get results.
- **Avoid interrogating the child.** You are not the therapist or the investigator. Let him tell you as much as he wants to. Listen, don't judge or give pity. Then assure him you will be there as a support, being careful not to make promises that you cannot keep.
- **One of the best ways you can help is to be a good role model.** Be consistent about your expectations for all children. Show children that you trust them, even if you are sometimes disappointed. Above all, avoid singling out the abused child for special treatment.
- **Finally, resist taking sides.** Never imply that the child's parents are unloving. This will only make the child resent you and create more isolation for him.

Always remember that working with abused children can be very emotionally draining. You cannot do it alone. You need support also. Seek help for yourself if the task becomes overwhelming.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT IS REPORTED



STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES BUT WORDS CAN HURT ME TOO

Carole M. Grates, Area Manager
Genesee County

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." I remember playing as a child and feeling hurt when someone called me a name, but invoking this little phrase could usually ease the pain. Now that I am an adult I know so well that words can hurt as much as sticks and stones. And, in truth, although the damage is not always visible like physical abuse, verbal abuse can have a devastating effect on children and the adults they become.

As a teacher, I was often dismayed by the words parents would sometimes use with their children. As a consultant, I was often equally dismayed by the words that teachers would sometimes use with their students. The saddest part is that many times it was meant to be in the best interest of the child, and the adult involved did not even hear the tone or the message conveyed. As significant adults in the lives of children, we need to sensitize ourselves to our words and our tone of voice and the messages they are giving.

How often have you heard, "How could you do such a dumb thing?" Most people, children included, do not set themselves up to do "something dumb." And if it is really dumb, a reminder of the stupidity is rarely needed — the child already knows. What she needs to know is how to clean it up and how to avoid doing it again. Sometimes adults may have actually set the stage for failure in these situations by filling the paint jars too full or pouring milk in a glass that is too hard for small hands to manage.

Empty threats are another way adults try to control children's behavior. One Sunday as I sat in the "crying room" of church, I heard a father reprimand his child for crying by threatening to shut her in a closet when they got home if she didn't stop. Of course he got his way, but how confusing and frightening to the child! First, we can hope he would not really do this, and if not then it is an empty threat and the child soon learns to ignore it. If, in fact, he would follow through, how frightening for the child as a threat and as a fact of her life. This can lead to nightmares or unreasonable fear of closed places. Many parents threaten their children with the bogeyman and then wonder why they are afraid of the dark. I also heard a day care provider threaten a child, "If you don't take a nap, you won't be able to go home." One, it is an empty threat because I am reasonably sure she was not going to stay at the center with the child all night. And two, how devastating to threaten children with

the loss of the most secure place they all know — their home base.

Our choice of words can also write a life script for a child if they are used often enough. Significant adults are a mirror in which the child sees the image he is reflecting to the world. When the mirror reflects only the negative side, that is the image he will develop.

When a child does something "wrong," you may hear an adult say, "You are stupid-bad-lazy-will never amount to anything" and on and on. If a child hears this enough, he begins to believe it about himself.

Adults also try to control children by threatening the loss of their love. Have you ever heard a parent say, "Get out of my sight, I can't stand to look at you," in response to misbehavior? Love needs to be unconditional. If it is not so in the early years, children will have a difficult time developing trust. This does not mean that adults have to accept everything a child does. It does mean that we describe the action, not the child, as unacceptable. A subtle change of wording can accomplish this.

Changing your approach can help change your words. The next time you are ready to spew out a few negative words or phrases in a situation, try the following:

STOP

Slow down and take time to think about your choice of words before they come out. Is there a positive way to correct that you can use in place of the negative? Using "I" messages can help here. Instead of saying, "You are so bad," try saying, "I feel really angry about what happened." This acknowledges the truth of the matter in an honest way without attacking the child.

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A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Carolyn King, Licensing Consultant
Ingham County

"You can spank him, if you need to." "She was terrible this morning!" "I want you to make her stand in the corner all morning." "Make her eat all of her food."

As a day care provider, you have probably heard a statement like one of these from a parent. The parent is asking you to discipline his child in a manner prohibited by the licensing rules and inappropriate if you are using positive child management techniques. You may often feel at a loss as to how to handle these requests without alienating the parents. It may even seem easier to use the same methods that the parents do. It is important to remember that you are in charge and have an opportunity to teach at these moments. Not only will you be showing the child that there are other ways to help him gain control of behavior, but you will be teaching the parents as well.

It may be enough to tell a parent that licensed providers are not allowed to use any child-handling method that does not promote the child's self-esteem and self-control. But it is also a perfect time to educate that parent about positive ways to guide and direct children. You may not be able to elaborate as the parent is rushing off to work, but a short conference by telephone or by appointment may be helpful.

Most of these situations can be avoided by writing a complete discipline policy that you go over carefully with the parent from the beginning. Your policy should stress the type of environment you are trying to create for the children in your care. Safe, loved, happy, fun, cared about, and respected are words providers often use when asked to describe the environment they want to create for the children in their care.

It is also useful to indicate what it is you are trying to teach the children through discipline. The adult who cares enough to discipline a child teaches

respect for others, sets limits, transmits values, and provides consequences for behavior. The result is a child who learns to control his own behavior. Self-control, in turn, builds self-confidence and self-esteem.

The methods used to manage children must be consistent with what you are trying to teach the children and achieve the type of environment you wish. Discipline that includes yelling, scolding, hitting and belittling does not model respect nor build self-esteem. Child management that tells a child what is expected, rewards positive behavior, and encourages choices will foster self-control and a sense of security.

Your discipline policy should state the many positive ways that you manage behavior and include such things as having simple rules and reminding the children of the rules when necessary. Redirecting behavior or altering the environment is effective, particularly for very young children. Having a predictable schedule each day and plenty of age-appropriate activities and toys keep the child positively engaged. Discipline is not needed as frequently when there is enough to do.

Take the time to familiarize parents with your philosophy and methods from the beginning. By consistently using the methods you have outlined in your policy, you teach the parents about you and about positive child management techniques. They will be less likely to ask you to spank or humiliate a child, and if they do, you have only to remind them of your policy and why it exists.

Human beings, whether they are adults or children, will respond to clear expectations offered in a consistent, respectful manner. Your parents may need your positive management techniques as much as the children do. By sharing your knowledge, you build a partnership with the parents. Child management becomes more consistent at home and at day care and everyone concerned wins.



HOW CAN I TELL WHETHER A CHILD IS BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED?

Symptoms of sexual abuse may include physical and behavioral signs as well as indirect or direct comments made by the child. There are several clues to look for when considering the possibility of sexual child abuse. Any of the symptoms listed below, singularly or in combination, indicate the need to explore the possibility of sexual abuse. Assessment of the symptoms should also take into account the developmental level of the child and your knowledge of the child are important assets in determining the possibility of sexual abuse.

Physical signs may include:

- Hematomas (localized swellings filled with blood)
- Lacerations
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Difficulty with urination or defecation
- Pregnancy
- Frequent somatic complaints
- Refusal to use bathroom
- Excessive use of bathroom
- Venereal disease in a young child
- Nightmares
- Daydreaming
- Difficulty in sitting

- Frequent vomiting
- Eating difficulties
- Hair loss – stress
- Children very tired all the time

Behavioral signs may include:

- One child's being treated by a parent in a significantly different way from the other children in the family
- Excessive fear of a particular sex arriving early at school and leaving late
- Nervous, aggressive, hostile, or disruptive behavior towards adults, especially toward the parents
- Little or no eye contact
- Excessive sexual curiosity
- Running away
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Sexual self-consciousness, provocativeness, vulnerability to sexual approaches
- Sexual promiscuity
- Withdrawal from social relationships
- Regressive behaviors such as acting childishly, crying excessively, withdrawing into fantasy worlds
- Acting out behaviors, sometimes including petty theft, giving things to other children to "buy" friendships, physical hostility, etc.
- Poor peer relationships
- Inability to make friends

"Sticks and Stones . . ."
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LOOK

Yes, look at what you are expecting from the child. Often we are expecting more than he can deliver. We know that young children cannot sit still for more than a few minutes. Why then do we expect that they will be able to make it through a church service for an hour without some misbehavior? If your review of your expectations reveals that you have asked something that cannot be delivered, your response to the misbehavior will be different. It still may need correcting, but your choice of words will be different.

LISTEN

Listen to your inner voice. What is the tone? Listen to your choice of words. Are they de-

scriptive of your anger, your feelings, your concerns or do they belittle or shame the child as a person?

ACT

By now, hopefully, you are in control. Describe your feelings — anger, concern, dismay — just be honest. Describe what made you angry. Then give the child constructive criticism. Write a script for her. Give her some skills so she will know how to act the next time the situation arises.

Does it take longer? Yes. But the child gains new life skills and also sees a reflection of herself as a competent human being in your adult mirror. Be sure that your words can never hurt a child.

WHAT TOAD CAN TEACH US ABOUT WHINING

Shanda Trent, Licensed Provider
Washtenaw County

Talk to any provider about preschoolers and whining. We all have a common response . . . "It drives me crazy." Persistent children try (and often succeed!) to wear grown-ups down, and whining is a major strategy.

"Stop whining," and "You're hurting my ears," usually don't work. Children don't hear their own whining. So what to do? Consult Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad stories.

At first glance, adults often dismiss the stories in these easy readers. But read several stories, and you'll see a pattern. Frog is usually portrayed as calm and matter of fact. Toad, however, is usually a whiner. A good hearted whiner, though.

I read these stories with great enthusiasm, because I share in childish humor! We especially enjoy, "A Swim" and best of all, "The Lost Button." Both stories come from Frog and Toad Are Friends. In "The Lost Button," Toad, in exasperation, cries, "The whole world is covered with buttons and not one of them is mine." Upon returning home, however, Toad finds his button on his own floor. But, being a lovable character, too, he sews all the "found" buttons on his jacket and presents it to Frog.

The children love to hear me whine Toad's dialogue. Then, throughout the week as opportunity arises, I whine. I didn't plan for the children to make the connection, but they told me, "You sound like Toad!" This has presented us with great fun, AND a tactful way of reminding children when they are whining, which saves their pride and self-esteem. Usually the children police themselves, and it turns into a good-natured dramatic play experience.



Check To Protect Our Kids

The Children's Trust Fund —
Check to Protect Our Kids

A child is abused every five minutes in Michigan, but you can help prevent such tragedies in seconds. In the time it takes you to check the Children's Trust Fund's (CTF) box on your state income tax return, you can help maintain their primary source of funding for programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. CTF, an independent non-profit organization, is a permanent source of funding for direct service child abuse and neglect **prevention programs** and Local Councils in 79 Michigan counties.

Taxpayers who check the CTF box on their state income tax return will be donating \$10 of their refund unless they wish to designate a specific amount in the space provided. These donations support community efforts such as pregnancy/newborn programs, parent skills training, and support groups. Please inform your fellow members, employees and customers of their option to participate in the income tax check-off. For additional information, CTF check inserts, or posters, please call (517) 373-4320. **A Small Effort Makes Such A Big Difference!**

*We're Not Asking You To Give Until It Hurts,
We're Asking You To Give Before It Hurts.*

Michigan Collaborative Early Childhood Conference

January 17-19, 1996
Detroit Westin Hotel,
Renaissance Center

RESOURCES: CHILD ABUSE

About Child Neglect, Emotional Abuse & Neglect of Children, Incest, Preventing Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse of Children and Sexual Victimization of Children, Six separate DSS scriptographic booklets.

The Abusing Family, Blair & Rita Justice, Human Science Press, NY, NY. 1976.

The Best Way We Know How, Geoffrey Canada, Young Children, 11/95, NAEYC.

Child Abuse — What You Should Know, Pre-K Today, April 1991, 800-544-2917.

A Child is Being Beaten — Violence Against Children — An American Tragedy, Naomi Feigelson Chase, McGraw-Hill Book Co., NY, NY.

Child Lures: What Every Parent Should Know About Preventing Sexual Abuse & Abduction, Kenneth Wooden, 1995, Summitt Publishing Group, Arlington, Texas.

Child Management for Parents & Caregivers, Mott Children's Health Center, DSS-PUB 331, Revised 4/93.

Child Protection Law, DSS Publication 3, Revised 1/95.

Let's Prevent Abuse: A Prevention Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals & Families with Young Children with Special Emphasis on the Needs of Children with Disabilities, Minneapolis, Pacer Center, 1990, S. Martinson (Ed).

Positive Discipline Environment, 19 minute DSS video available for loan at no charge from the local Licensing office.

Positive Discipline Methods, 26 minutes DSS video available for loan at no charge from the local Licensing office.

Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect in Child Care Settings, Renitta Goldman, Day Care and Early Education, Spring 1995.

Reducing Stress in Young Children's Lives, Janet Brown McCracken, Editor, NAEYC, Washington D.C.

Sexual Abuse of Children with Special Needs: Are They Safe in Day Care, Day Care & Early Education, 1993.

"Ends of the Rainbow"

State Teleconference

on

Caring For School-Age Children

March 9, 1996, 8:15 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.

in

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Traverse City

Muskegon

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PLAYGROUND SAFETY GUIDELINES

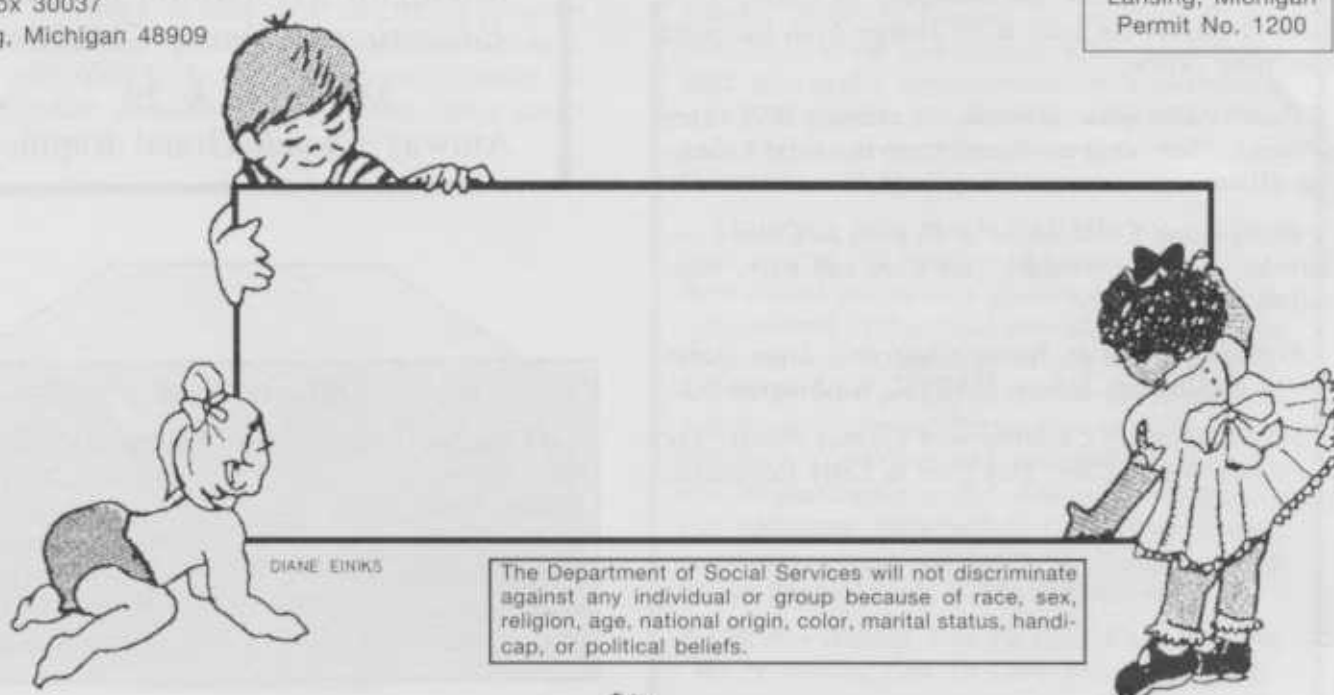
Denise Mehlich and Julie Ashcroft,
Students
The University of Michigan,
Dearborn

1. Advise parents to remove, tie up or tuck in all hood drawstrings, mitten cords, loose clothing and scarves; these present a strangulation hazard to children using playground equipment. Drawstrings can be replaced with elastic or velcro. After removing drawstrings from hood, thread elastic through the same opening, placing a safety pin at one end of the elastic to help guide it through the empty casing. When elastic is in place, pull it taught enough to aid in keeping the hood fit snugly around the child's face. Anchor the ends of the elastic by stitching near the drawstring openings. Trim off excess elastic. Remove the pin. Velcro may also be a suitable method of fitting the hood more snugly under the chin in the absence of drawstrings.

2. Close or pinch shut open "S" type hooks on swings or any other equipment. These and any other equipment component that could hook or catch on clothing such as protruding bolts (especially at the top of a slide or climber) should be repaired or replaced.
3. Remove all ropes tied to slides, climbers, and other equipment as these can become entangled around the neck and strangle a child.
4. Eliminate, or closely supervise the use of, equipment having areas where a child cannot be seen at all times.
5. Alter or eliminate equipment with interior openings of between 3.5 and 9 inches which may allow entrapment.
6. Fill in or eliminate where possible connecting joints seen on slides or climbing equipment.
7. Remove from the playground all equipment which represents a potential strangulation hazard which cannot be altered or repaired.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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DIANE EINKS

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